



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

WEST BANK/GAZA

FACT SHEET

EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Palestinian Faculty Development Program (PFDP)

PROJECT PROFILE

JANUARY 2011



A Faculty Development Series led by Itaf Arafat for Speech Therapy Faculty.

CHALLENGES

- Lack of sustainable, non-donor financial resources required for critical sector improvements.
- General reliance on traditional faculty-centered teaching methodology.
- Lack of collaborative efforts across academic institutions.
- Changing political landscape in higher education, especially in Gaza.

Project Overview

The PFDP aims to increase the capacity of higher education faculty in the West Bank and Gaza by addressing the long-term issues of reform in teaching and learning practices. The program provides scholarship support for Palestinian faculty to pursue a graduate degree in the United States or to engage in curriculum development, research, or teaching at a partner university. In this way, PFDP promotes the expansion, retention, and professional development of promising academics teaching in the social sciences and humanities. It also revitalizes and reforms teaching in Palestinian higher education institutions. This program is a partnership between USAID, the Open Society Institute, and U.S. universities.

Goals

- Promote the expansion, retention, and professional development of promising academics in the social sciences and humanities.
- Revitalize and reform teaching at Palestinian higher education institutions.
- Promote an institutional culture of teaching and learning.

Activities

PFDP aims to improve the quality of teaching by providing U.S. PhD and Master's Scholarships to Palestinian faculty in order to equip them with the most up-to-date teaching methodologies. PFDP also provides faculty with an opportunity to engage in the U.S. education system through short-term fellowships of two semesters each. In order to address core reform issues in teaching practices, PFDP also provides university faculty with an opportunity to develop teaching and learning methods. PFDP provides faculty grants and collaborative project funding that enable professors across a variety of disciplines to develop specific projects within their fields of expertise.

PFDP supports reform in higher education through promotion and reward systems. PFDP is supporting Centers for Excellence in Teaching in Palestinian universities in order to encourage an institutional culture of quality teaching. PFDP also holds one of the largest education-related conferences in Palestine, the Academic Colloquium, which is an annual conference that celebrates excellent teaching and scholarship across many disciplines. During this conference, PFDP recognizes excellent teachers by providing Teaching Excellence Awards to faculty in the West Bank and Gaza.

To ensure sustainability of the reform process, PFDP provides administrative and strategic planning support to the MoEHE and participating universities' administrative bodies.



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Recipients of the Teaching Excellence Awards at the PFDP Annual Colloquium in July 2010.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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For political and security reasons, most of PFDP's recent activities have focused on West Bank institutions. However, recent changes in U.S. policy and Mission priorities have allowed PFDP to support limited higher education activities in Gaza. USAID is initiating support for scholarships to Al-Azhar University students, as well as faculty grants and teaching excellence awards

The scope and depth of the PFDP will create a cadre of academic leaders that will be in the position to shape Palestinian higher education for generations to come.

Successes

- Awarded 34 scholarships for university teachers to pursue Ph.D. degrees in the United States. Seven have already graduated and returned to Palestine.
- Held three Academic Colloquia to highlight new teaching methodologies. More than 230 faculty members attended the July 2009 Colloquium held at An Najah University in Nablus. The fourth Colloquium will be held in July 2010 in Ramallah.
- Sent 21 faculty members to the Administrative Seminars at the Central European University in Budapest. The seminars gave faculty the opportunity to interact with other international faculty, and learn about such issues as fundraising, student support services, quality in higher education, and internationalizing universities.
- Awarded four sub-grants to collaborative projects in teaching that are intended to encourage faculty members to work on improving teaching quality in their disciplines across a number of institutions.
- Supported 42 short-term fellowships so that faculty could visit universities in the United States. These exchanges initiated a range of Palestinian-American cooperation on a number of different topics.
- Published the *National Study of Undergraduate Teaching* that provides valuable information on current teaching practices and trends in Palestine, as well as the means of teacher assessment.
- Awarded 2050 scholarships to students enrolled at Al Azhar University in Gaza covering the tuition fees for two semesters.

Project Detail

Implementing Partner: AMIDEAST; Life of Project: 09/29/2005-09/28/2012; Total Estimated Cost: \$18,404,213.